

SNAP!

NEWS THAT BITES BACK!

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CTU grins and bears law change

THE COUNCIL of Trade Unions (CTU) says it is looking forward to the amended Employment Relations Bill coming into effect in December, despite president Ross Wilson admitting the bill “will not significantly strengthen multi-employer bargaining.”

The bill mildly tweaks the Employment Relations Act, but doesn't meet union hopes: It hasn't increased workers' ability to develop industry-wide contracts; it retains the ban on strikes in sympathy with other workers; all strikes are illegal unless agreements have expired; and employers can weasel their way out of collecting union fees.

The much anticipated job security clause, where in theory agreements hold if a company changes hands, is toothless and applies only to a small selection of workers, not necessarily the most vulnerable.



Workers! Your future is secure with Labour

Instead of organising opposition to the union restrictions imposed by Labour, Ross Wilson has directed his main fire at National's Don Brash who would repeal the act if elected. “New Zealanders will note he has once again committed to attack their basic rights at work if he becomes Prime

Minister next year,” he says.

Labour's laws are barely less restrictive than National's ghastly Employment Contracts Act.

CTU leaders do workers no favours with their perpetual ‘Labour is a tiny bit better, we can live with that’ line.



Being best bitter blow

DESPITE THE World Bank ranking New Zealand top in “ease of business”, lobby groups continue to scaremonger about pro-worker legislation.

Last week's report ranked New Zealand highest out of 145 countries on seven sets of indicators deemed to show how easy it is to start a business. Protecting investors, ease of hiring and firing, and the ability to obtain credit were key areas examined. Recent reports from the OECD and the World Bank have praised the business-friendliness of New Zealand.

However, capitalist activists used the announcement to engage in their usual bouts of grumbling. Business is unhappy about everything from the Resource Management Act, to increases in annual leave provisions and labour law reform. If it's good for business, it's not good enough, if it's good for workers the country will collapse.

Lobby group Business NZ whinges on about “entrenched union power”. “Disappointing” mopes the Business Roundtable, while right-wing ‘zine, the National Business Review, squeals “like rust, the government never rests when it comes to finding new ways to put impediments in the path of private sector wealth creation.”

The same people moan about the lack of available workers. Lower

unemployment means workers might be more choosy about jobs and demand more rights, preventing further cutting of labour costs. Workers continue to leave the country for better money and conditions elsewhere.

But do we want to be business friendly? Two decades of “business friendly” neo-liberal reform devastated communities, undermined workers' rights and impoverished families. Accustomed to post-reform culture, the public often don't distinguish between business and community interests.

The government talks of partnership between government and business. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are already in place for water supplies in Papakura and Ruapehu district and are proposed for roading in Auckland. These schemes allow business to off-load the risks and social costs onto government, while grabbing a sector of the economy where customers and profits are guaranteed.

Despite the ritual moaning, the enthusiasm for PPPs reveals what we've known along – business and government have a shared interest in fucking us over.

Vox Pop!

1. What's your favourite film about the struggle of good versus evil?
2. Do you think the cinema makes more profit from ticket or candy bar sales?
3. Which film villain best represents managers who refuse to pay staff more than the minimum wage?

David



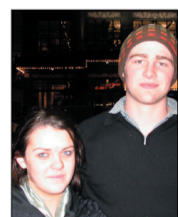
1. I can't categorise them like that. I suspect that those ones aren't my favourite.

2. The candy bar. They have a 75 per cent margin on the stuff they sell. I was just reading about the picket that's going to be organised here to get the kids off youth rates.

3. Roger Smith the General Motors manager from Roger and Me.

Olivia and Luke

1. Spiderman.
 2. Ticket sales.
- A lot of people bring their own snacks now.
3. That guy from Johnny English.



Crystal

1. Lord of the Rings.
2. Candy bar. I work in the movies.
3. Scrooge McDuck.

Comment

Council plans unaffordable city

THE LATEST masterstroke by the Wellington City Council is a planned rise in debt to finance roading, infrastructure and other projects.

The city's \$77 million debt is expected to rise to \$330 million by 2013. Residential rates increases of 54 per cent over this period are planned as the cost of running the council is moved from businesses to residents. The council says quadrupling the debt means the average ratepayer pays an extra \$4 a week to service the debt, up from the current average of \$2.20.

Regardless of how the figures actually pan out, it's clear the council is driving up the cost of living in Wellington. The council has recently increased the cost of rubbish bags and parking in the city.

Rents have skyrocketed in recent years, making Wellington an expensive place to live for those of us on low or even average incomes. Wellington may well follow the path of other cities that suffer massive problems as a result of high living costs.

In London, the city has been forced to offer cheap housing to ‘essential workers’ – police, nurses and teachers in order to encourage such people to stay in the city. Other sectors are finding it difficult to fill low-paid, but equally essential positions – labourers, cleaners, and shop workers. People working in these positions often engage in criminal, or semi-legitimate activities such as squatting, ducking out on bills or buying stolen or smuggled goods in order to stay afloat.

London is losing population overall. New workers are often recently arrived immigrants, short-term

Council debt



Kerry Prendergast is planning for a quadrupling of Wellington's debt over the next nine years. migrants and travellers, and illegals willing to accept a low standard of living.

Is a ‘tolerable level of criminality’ the future for the “creative capital?” Capitalism has little else to offer as the better-off continue to off-load the cost of government and infrastructure onto those already struggling.

Correction: Reading Cinema's offer to its staff mentioned in last week's issue retained youth rates and didn't include anything above the first offer.

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